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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQI NSC DISCUSSES NTM-I AND OTHER ISSUES AT
NOVEMBER 16 MEETING

REF: BAGHDAD 3504

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[11](#). (S) Summary. At the November 16, Iraqi NSC meeting, NSA Rubaie unexpectedly raised the future of the NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM-I). When the NSC became bogged down on the issue of the wide range of other possible areas of cooperation proposed by NATO in addition to the training already being conducted in Iraq, MNF-I CG General Odierno clarified for the NSC that the Government of Iraq needed to approve a status arrangement for NTM-I to continue its current missions, and that other areas were just possibilities for the future. The NSC noted that many of the recommendations from an investigation into Christian persecution and displacement in Ninewa had already been implemented and others were underway. A lengthy discussion of the need to examine critical infrastructure protection turned into a debate over whether the existing body in the Ministry of Defense was sufficient to address this issue. Discussing detainees, the NSC focused on 616 cases of detainees with no paper trail that were now in GOI custody. The Prime Minister was concerned these individuals would have to be released but ordered a rapid review to see if charges should be brought against any of them. The PM stated his strong support for GOI initiatives to improve security at airports and religious sites. End Summary.

Relations with NATO

[12](#). (C) National Security Advisor Mowafaq Rubaie put before the NSC a proposal from NATO to discuss NTM-I missions in Iraq. The proposal included 19 potential fields for expanded cooperation, such as border security, counter terrorism, defense reform, defense budgeting, and military education. Minister of Defense (MOD) Abdul Qadir al-Mufriji objected to the formation of a committee to consider NTM-I, as the MOD currently works directly with NTM-I in conjunction with MNSTC-I, and Abdul Qadir saw no reason to change the current arrangement. He noted that the Prime Minister had agreed to extend NTM-I's activities through the end of 2009. Rubaie responded to Abdul Qadir, stating that after the end of 2008, Iraq's relationship with MNF-I would change and that Iraq would have to engage NATO bilaterally, responding to the organization's offer directly. He said that Iraq had to conduct its foreign relations as a unified state through the Foreign Ministry (MFA), rather than via multiple channels running through various ministries. Rubaie stated that NATO would have to have a status of forces arrangement outside of MNF-I. PM Maliki stated that the proposal warranted further discussion, but expressed particular concern over the defense budget and proposed reform issues.

[13](#). (C) General Odierno stated that there were two separate issues at hand which the GOI should not confuse. First is the need for Iraq to approve extension of NTM-I that includes both training and advising on a broad range of topics. The second issue is the list of 19 proposed areas for additional

cooperation, which do not require a separate agreement, just discussion on a case by case basis with NATO allies.

¶4. (C) PM Maliki stated that NATO training assistance is needed, and that the proposal was an excellent opportunity to develop the security forces, capacity. However, he wanted the concerned ministries to sit down together and go through the proposal item by item. The Minister of Defense again raised objections to forming a committee, but Rubaie quickly countered that it was necessary to act in unison. Abdul Qadir stated that it was more appropriate to work through the Commander in Chief, rather than the MFA. Bulani said that he concurred with the need for the GOI to act in a unified fashion, but that the concerned ministries were already engaged in ongoing NATO programs and the need for an additional committee was questionable.

¶5. (C) LTG Helmick responded that the list of 19 proposed areas of cooperation was just for the consideration of the GOI, a supplement to what NTM-I is already providing. He explained that as Commander of MNSTC-I he is also responsible for NTM-I, and that all requests for NATO training could go through MNSTC-I. He said that requests received by MNSTC-I would be bid on by NATO members based on their ability to provide the support and level of interest in doing so. He noted that the current system is working well, and that the list of 19 proposed fields for cooperation was not intended to address identified deficiencies; rather it is merely a list of possible future programs.

¶6. (C) PM Maliki then asked a rhetorical question, "do we need NATO?" which he immediately answered with a firm "yes."

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He said that MOD could work directly with NATO, and that the GOI would have to provide the legal authority for them to do so. The PM stated that Iraq could cooperate with NATO, but that he did not want to begin work on another agreement, concluding that in reference to the U.S. SOFA discussions, "we should finish one agreement before we move on to the next."

Investigation Results on Christian Displacement in Ninewa

¶7. (SBU) The PM reminded the NSC that the draft report of the results on Christian displacement in Ninewa had been distributed, and that it included 13 recommendations. He said that some of the recommendations had already been put in action, while others were yet to be implemented. Minister of State for National Security Affairs (MSNSA) Shirwan al-Waeli noted one issue was the failure of the Governor to properly spend the budget for the province and the question was whether there was additional money available. The PM asked Minister of Finance (MOF) Bayan Jabr if there was any reserve money, to which the MOF responded "some."

National Program for Critical Infrastructure Protection

¶8. (S) Dr. Samir al-Sadoun, NSC Intelligence Advisor, told the NSC that protecting critical infrastructure involved more than the protection of facilities, and that it would have to focus increasingly on the protection of interdependent systems that could produce catastrophic failures in multiple sectors if a critical node in one system was hit. As an example, he noted how an attack on the electrical grid could also imperil health care and the provision of government services. He said that terrorist groups were well aware of this vulnerability and intended to exploit it. He said that the GOI could no longer build infrastructure first then put protection in place after completion, but that the government would now have to protect as it built. He stated that there were two dimensions to infrastructure protection, the "information side," primarily in the form of electronic communications, and the more conventional physical protection conducted by the MOI and MOD. He proposed a new organization to address critical infrastructure protection.

¶9. (S) The Minister of Defense expressed great umbrage that this subject was being raised in the NSC as the MOD had an inter-ministerial center it had run since 2004, specifically focused on protecting all of Iraq's infrastructure. The Minister of Science and technology, Ra'id Fahmi Jahid, responded that electronic warfare now posed the greatest threat to the nation's infrastructure, and that if communications networks had not been afforded effective protection, and it was appropriate to consider a new body. After much discussion about whether the MOD body was sufficient. Maliki instructed that all of the concerned ministries should meet to discuss whether a new organization was necessary.

Rule of Law and Detention Affairs Update

¶10. (S) The Chief Judge Medhat al Mahoud, the head of Iraq's Higher Judicial Council, read a report on the status of detention issues including the latest statistics on the number of detainees (approx 122,000), the number eligible for amnesty (approx 15,000), the number sentenced (approx 8300), the number on bail (approx 57,000), fugitives (approx 42,500) and prisoners not eligible for amnesty (approx 30,000). Minister of Justice (MOJ) Safa al Safi said that his greatest concern was 616 detainees who had been transferred to GOI custody without any paper work. PM Maliki asked where they had come from, and Safi said it was not clear but that some came from police stations and others may have come from MNF-I. The PM stated that if there was no legal basis to hold them, the undocumented detainees would have to be released but he ordered an immediate review by all appropriate authorities to see if charges should be brought against any of them.

¶11. (S) Turning to other issues Maliki noted, that some suspects could not be prosecuted because AQI killed the witnesses, and that similar cases should be moved to venues where the courts were strong enough, and security good enough, to prevent acquittal due to intimidation. MOJ Safi expressed dismay that 14 confidential informants had recently been killed, and MOI Bulani said that the MOI might have to create a "special capacity" to deal with this problem. The PM turned to Bulani and said that if police were responsible for passing information on sources to the insurgents, the officers would have to be removed, and Bulani conceded that there might be some infiltrators among the uniformed ranks of the MOI.

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¶12. (S) Continuing on the theme of terrorist networks in Iraq, the head of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service, Al-Shehwani, read a report on current threats and said that terrorists continued to target checkpoints, border crossings, and polling centers. He said that the insurgents planned to use chemical weapons (chlorine) and fertilizer based explosives to carry out attacks. He also said that the networks were actively recruiting. Al-Shehwani noted that Iraq faces threats on multiple fronts; AQI operatives in Saudi Arabia continued to move funds into Iraq, while simultaneously, new special group members were being trained in Iran.

Airport Security

¶13. (C) Minister of Transportation (MOT) Amir Abd al-Jabar stated that with regard to airport security, MOT's objective was to achieve international standards, and reduce airline insurance costs in Iraq by as much as 80 percent. He explained that the Iraqi Civil Air Authority (ICAA), which is under the MOT, bears primary responsibility for security at the nation's airports. The MOT cited two key areas for improvement. First, too many people had access into the secure areas of the airports, including officials who took up residence in the terminal buildings. He complained about the

lack of coordination with the security bodies and use of the airport by other entities (such as the requirement for COR members to have VIP lounges and offices). There was considerable discussion between the MOI and others about how the airports should be run without any conclusions reached.

Targeting of Religious Sites

¶14. (S) MSNSA Waeli said that extremists were targeting holy sites, shrines and houses of worship. He stated that security at some shrines and churches was inadequate and needed to be improved. PM Maliki said that this was AQI's response to defeat, that there was danger in the insurgents' efforts to incite sectarian violence, and that if there were identified vulnerabilities, the GOI would have to bolster security to protect religious sites. The PM then asked the NSC who would take this challenge on, and MOI Bulani responded that his ministry was expanding the resources it had allocated to address this problem.
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